NO80-630 ERIC REPORT RESUME

ED 010 143 12-29-66 24 (REV)

THE NOVEL, THE ONE-ACT PLAY, NONSTORIED FORMS--LITERATURE CURRICULUM II4, STUDENT VERSION.

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CRP-H-149-14
BR-5-0366-14
- -65
EDRS PRICE MF-$0.18 HC-$2.84 71P.

*CURRICULUM GUIDES, *STUDY GUIDES, *LITERATURE, *DRAMATICS, AMERICAN LITERATURE, EIGHTH GRADE, *ENGLISH CURRICULUM, LITERATURE PROGRAMS, EUGENE, OREGON, PROJECT ENGLISH, NEW GRAMMAR

A GUIDE FOR STUDENT USE WAS PREPARED FOR AN EIGHTH-GRADE LANGUAGE CURRICULUM. THE GUIDE INCLUDED STUDIES OF CHAPTERS FROM, "THE CALL OF THE WILD," AND "THE PEARL," AND THE STUDY OF ONE-ACT PLAYS ("A NIGHT AT AN INN," AND "TRIFLES,") IN ADDITION TO UNITS OF STUDY ON LITERATURE FORM INVOLVING EITHER DEFINITION, EXAMPLE, COMPARISON, OR CONTRAST. BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR EACH UNIT WAS DISCUSSED. PASSAGES GRADED FOR DIFFICULT, INTERMEDIATE, AND SIMPLE ASSIGNMENTS WERE PRESENTED WITH QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES AT EACH LEVEL. AN ACCOMPANYING GUIDE WAS PREPARED FOR TEACHERS (ED 010 144). (WN)

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OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

THE NOVEL
THE ONE-ACT PLAY
NON-STORIED FORMS

Literature Curriculum II
Student Version

ED 010143

The project reported herein was supported through the Cooperative Research Program of the Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

NOVEL: THE CALL OF THE WILD (London)

Literature Curriculum II

Student Version

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THE CALL OF THE WILD

"The Call of the Wild was written in 1903 by Jack London. It became a best seller immediately, and has remained one of the mos famous and popular animal stories of all time. It has been translated into many languages. Most people would agree that it has become that undefinable thing called a 'classic.' It is the story of Buck, a dog, who leaves his home in California, becomes a sled dog in the North, and ends up becoming the leader of a wolf pack. It is filled with action, and is a story that all childern enjoy. I liked it. It's a good book

"Goldilocks and the Three Bears was written about 1803 by Robert Southey. It became a best seller immediately, and has remained one of the most famous and popular animal stories of all time. It has been translated into many languages. Most people would agree that it has become the undefinable thing called a 'classic.' It is the story of three bears who leave their home for a walk in the woods. When they return they find that someone has been in their house. It turns out to be a little girl who is scared and runs away. It is filled with action, and is a story that all children enjoy. I liked it. It's a good book."

We hope that by the time you have finished studying The Call of the Wild you will be able to be more intelligent in your discussion than the passage above. This is not to say that you are not supposed to like it; indeed, the book was chosen because most people, both children and adults, do like it. However, it is the purpose of this course to help you understand how a novel is put together, what goes on within the story besides the story-line itself, why an author selects the incidents he does, what the author's point of view is---in other words, what there is besides different incidents that makes The Call of the Wild different from Goldilocks.

As you observed in your previous studies of literary works, the subject of a work of literature tends to deal with both the world of things and the world of ideas. You will find this same process goingon in The Call of the Wild. Things happen in the story in the realm of the mind as well as in the realm of the senses. Buck works, fights, and kills; men work, fight, and kill; sleds fall through the ice and wolf packs sweep through the country. But at the same time that all this is going on in the realm of the senses, things are going on in the realm of ideas. Buck's reaction to these experiences, and our reaction to them, are as important to the total effect of the story as the experiences themselves. In other words, the incidents on the level of the senses do not exist for their own sake any more than, say, the incidents in "The Price of the Head" existed for their own sake. We are invited to respond on the level of ideas to incidents on the level of the senses.

This brings us to another aspect of literature with which you have been dealing, point of view. There are several points of view that you will want to keep in mind as you read the book. First, there is the technical point of view. This is concerned with whether the book was written in the first or third person, whether the author is omniscient, whether he focuses on one character in particular. Then there is another meaning of the phrase "point of view" which you will want to keep in mind, this one related to what was discussed under subject. If the subject of the story is concerned with a response to incidents as well as with incidents themselves, then we can say that this response represents a certain point of view. An illustration might help make this idea clear.

Suppose someone slips and falls down the stairs. You might hurry to help him get up; another person might stand and laugh. Each of these is a response to an incident, each illustrating a different point of view, a different reaction on the level of ideas to incidents on the level of the senses.

Now add further difficulty--an author. The author describes an incident in which a person falls downstairs. He describes another person as laughing at the incident. Then he stops his narrative and says how mean that person was to laugh. Here the point of view of the author and of the person who laughed are not the same, and the author is trying to get us to accept his point of view.

What you need to keep in mind as you read is that there are three points of view besides the technical one: the point of view of a character, the point of view of the author, and our own (the reader's) point of view. And none of these need necessarily be the same If the character who laughed is described as being very attractive, and is the hero of the story, or if the author praises him for laughing, that does not mean that we need accept that point of view. The Devil can be a gentleman.

We come now to the third aspect of the study of literature, Form. If incidents and reaction to them are the concern of subject and point of view, then the incidents the author picks and the pattern these incidents are arranged in become very important. As you learned this year, one way authors plan their works is to choose between storied and non-storied types, between types organized around a story and types following another plan. Clearly a novel, like a short story, or a narrative poem, or a ballad, is a storied form. It is built on a framework of a series of events.

But this doesn't get us very far; there are any number of different ways to organize a series of events--any number of possible different frameworks. As you progress through your courses in literature you will run into many different methods of organization. But one of the most frequently used is a method you have seen before, the story of a journey, such as was used in the "Price of the Head" and other journey stories. This is the method of organizing the narrative that is used in The Call of theWild. Buck,

the hero, takes a journey from California to the Yukon, and from there he journeys into the unknown interior of Alaska, where the story ends. This journey into the wilderness matches on the level of the senses what happens on the level of the spirit: Buck's growing adjustment to a savage life.

What happens in the Call of the Wild actually is what happens in most works of literature, and you should begin to be able to see it as you read this book. And that is that the three aspects of literature you have been dealing with--subject, form, and point of view--are really only three different ways of looking at the same thing. They each are really part of the other two, and all three work in combination to produce a work of literature. Subject is really inseparable from form, and point of view is dependent on what the author gives you to look at. As you read this novel, see if you can notice how these three aspects combine to give a total effect, and how you cannot really separate one from the other.

STUDY QUESTIONS

You have read the book once all the way through. As you re-read it for class work, read and think about the following questions. They will help you understand the book and will be used as the basis for class discussions.

Chapter I

1. What, in the technical sense of the phrase, is the point of view of the book? On whom is the author focusing most of his attention? Does he ever "step out" of the story and talk in his own voice?

2. It is clear that London is trying to write a realistic story. This is not a fable, in which animals think and talk like human beings; Buck is a dog and remains a dog. What difficulties can you think of that face the author who chooses an animal for his hero? How does London solve these problems? Do you think there is any connection between this problem and London's choice of the point of view from which he writes his story?

3. We have said that the plan on which this story is based is the journey. We have also noticed that the subject of a piece of literature is a mixture of action and response to that action. In what ways does Chapter I get all these things started?

4. In any good novel, the author selects his incidents with an eye on his main theme and with the purpose of keeping the story going. London does this here. What characters can you find introduced in this chapter who figure in later events? Can you find any characters or incidents which seem to you unnecessary?

Chapter II

1. What is the purpose of the first paragraph of this chapter? Can you relate this paragraph to any of the techniques you have been studying in your own writing?

2. In this chapter Buck is thrown into the middle of his new world and must either learn to adapt to it or die. He learns, and the first part of the chapter is devoted to three incidents that illustrate his learning. What are they? We have said that an artist practices economy, that he selects incidents with a purpose in mind. Can you find any reason why London selected these three incidents in particular?

3. In the second part of this chapter London interrupts his narrative to speak in his own voice about what is happening to Buck. Besides remarking that Buck learned through reviving instincts as well as through experience, he also deals with the changes in Buck on two different levels. What are these levels? How do they relate to what you have been studying in this course?

4. What is London's point of view toward these changes? Do you agree with what he says about morality? Does his point of view apply only to animals, or do you think he believes this should apply to men too? Do you agree with his point of view?

5. What is London's attitude towards Nature, as far as you can determine it? Does this fit in with his other ideas or not?

Chapter III

1. In what way can this chapter be said to mark a change in Buck?

2. What is the major incident in this chapter? Where does it come in the chapter? What obvious conclusion can you draw about the way this chapter is constructed?

3. Is there any principle of economy in the structure of this chapter? In other words, are the many incidents in the chapter selected with any purpose or direction, or are they selected at random?

4. In terms of the journey structure of the narrative, where is the dog team going during this chapter? Where has it been? Where does it go?

Chapter IV

1. This story is about the survival of the fittest, adaptation to environment, the influence of environment on behavior,

among other themes. Why don't such topics stay in a biology class, where they belong?

2. If this story is about adaptation to environment, and if Buck has achieved mastery as the title of the chapter indicates, why doesn't the story stop?

3. The direction of Buck's fortunes takes a sudden turn in this chapter. Where does this happen? Why do you think this reversal is placed where it is?

4. What does the man Buck sees in the fire symbolize?

5. In terms of the journey structure of the narrative, where is the dog team during this chapter?

Chapter V

1. Can you see any relation between the people who become Buck's masters and what happens to him?

2. What does London think of being leader of a dog team as a life's work? How do you know?

3. During this chapter, where is the team going? Can you see any connection between the journey structure of the narrative and Buck's career? A pendulum goes back and forth until it stops, but does it ever get anywhere? What does this suggest to you about the relation between narrative structure and point of view?

4. On the basis of this chapter and the last, what would you say was the main cause of Buck's reversal? Is this cause within his control?

5. In connection with the question above, why do you think London focuses on the people in this chapter instead of the dogs, and why does he describe them the way he does?

Chapter VI

1. Consider the main incidents in this chapter. In previous clusters of incidents it has been possible to see some pattern in London's selection. Can you find any here?

2. There seems to be a conflict between Buck's progress to complete wildness and his love for Thornton. How does London deal with this conflict?

Chapter VIII

1. Consider the journey theme with which this story is

concerned. It should be obvious by now that London chose the story of a journey as his narrative form because it matched the story of what could be called Buck's mental journey from civilization to wildness with their varying codes. Thus, the narrative structure supports the theme. How does the trip that they take in this chapter support the theme of the book?

2. What purpose does the finding of the gold serve?

3. How does London show in this chapter Buck's increasing response to the "call"? Has he used this method before this chapter?

4. What purpose do the Yeehats serve in the story?

5. In terms of the main theme of the story, was Thornton's death inevitable?

6. What is the focus of interest in this chapter? Why do the raid and the death of Thornton take place "offstage"?

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

NOVEL--THE PEARL

Literature Curriculum II

Student Version

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THE PEARL

Introduction

The Pearl, by John Steinbeck, has been selected as the work to introduce you to what is probably the most popular form of literary expression in the 20th century -- the novel. If the novel has a rival in popularity, it is another form of fiction, the short story.

You have read in this course several short stories. A novel has much in common with a short story. Both are written in prose. Both are what you have learned to call "storied forms," that is, their main principle of organization is the narrative of a series of events. The novel, then, is a form that has many many points of similarity with forms you have already studied. Let us leave a discussion of the differences until later, merely saying now that the main difference you will notice is that most novels are longer than most short stories and cannot be read in a single sitting.

As you observed in your earlier studies of literature, the subject of a piece of literature tends to deal with both the world of things and the world of ideas. You will find this same process going on in The Pearl. In the realm of the senses a diver finds a pearl, houses burn, men are killed, and babies are bitten by scorpions. But at the same time that all this is going on, things are going on in the realm of ideas. The reaction of the people in the story to these happenings, and the reaction of the reader to them, are as important to the total effect of the story as the happenings themselves. You will recall that in "The Price of the Head," for instance, there was more to the story than just the incidents that made up the story. Also, when you read parables last year, you found that the story was merely the vehicle for the expression of an idea. In other words, you were supposed to react on the level of ideas to happenings on the level of the senses. In this novel, Steinbeck himself actually calls it a parable.

This brings us to another term in the study of literature with which you are familiar, point of view. There are several points of view you must keep in mind as you read a novel. First, there is the technical point of view. This is concerned with whether the book is written in the first or third person, and whether the author concentrates on one character in particular or whether he pretends to be omniscient -- that is, whether he deals with the thoughts and feelings of all his characters.

Then there is a second meaning of the phrase "point of view" that you will want to keep in mind, which is related to what was mentioned under subject. We said that the subject of a story is concerned with a response to incidents as well as with incidents themselves. If this is true, than we can say that this response indicates a certain point of view.

An illustration might help make this point clear. Suppose someone slips and falls downstairs. You might hurry to help him get up; another person might stand and laugh. Each of you has responded to an incident in a different way, and so each of you has shown a different point of view towards an incident, a different reaction on the level of ideas to an incident on the level of the senses.

Now add a further difficulty -- an author. The author describes an incident in which a person falls downstairs. He describes another person as laughing at the incident. Then he stops his narrative and says how mean that person was to laugh. Here the point of view of the author and of the person who laughed are not the same, and the author is trying to get us to accept his point of view.

What you need to keep in mind as you read is that there are three points of view besides the technical one: the point of view of a character, the point of view of the author, and your own (the reader's) point of view. And none of these need necessarily be the same. If the character who laughed is described as being very attractive, and is the hero of the story, that does not mean that we need accept that point of view.

Let us now deal with the third key term in the vocabulary of this course, form. If happenings and the reactions to them are the concern of subject and point of view, then it follows that the incidents the author picks and the way these incidents are arranged become very important. As you learned this year, one way authors plan their works is to choose between storied and non-storied types. Clearly a novel, like a short story or a narrative poem or a ballad, is a storied form. It is built on the framework of a series of events. In The Pearl Steinbeck has picked the simplest method possible for arranging his events, the chronological. This means that one event follows the next in a straight order of time, with no "flashbacks" or forward jumps. It is this straight chronological series of events which provides the vehicle for transporting the author's ideas. In real life, we all live one day at a time, a day crowded with myriads of unimportant details occurring one at a time, without significant order or pattern. The world a writer creates is different. He selects only the incidents that are significant for his purpose, and writes about those. Sometimes, if he plans an important event to happen later, he may hint at this future event, to prepare the reader's mind before it happens. By stressing some details and omitting others he manipulates the elements of his story and weaves them into a unity so that the reader experiences the total impact of his ideas. But in order to appreciate the full meaning of the whole, it is helpful to isolate and examine some of the separate elements that go into the making of a piece of literature, never forgetting as we do this that they work in combination, and are not really independent of each other. Subject is really inseparable from form, and point of view is dependent upon the purpose of the author. As you read The Pearl, you will experience the total effect of the work, and

it is only for convenience that we will separate the elements in our discussion.

Study Questions

1. Notice the descriptive details at the beginning of the story. Why do you think the author chose these things to talk about? What kind of mood and setting is he establishing? Find other details in the first chapter that contribute to this background.

2. Throughout the story, Steinbeck has brought in repeatedly the songs of Kino and his people. What effect does this have on the reader? Why do you think no new songs were added? (p. 2) When did the song of Evil first come into the story? Find other places where the song is mentioned. When is it good? When is it evil? Why do you think the author uses this device?

3. When Coyotito is bitten by the scorpion, when Kino and Juana take him to the doctor, when Kino finds the pearl, and when he goes to town to sell the pearl, the neighbors stand around and watch and make comments on what is happening. Why do you think Steinbeck put them into the story?

4. What kind of person is Kino? Find a physical description. Is it very detailed? How does Kino become more real to you as the story progresses? Find details about Juana. What kind of person is she? Does she understand Kino? Does Kino appreciate her? Find examples in the text to illustrate your answers.

5. Who is the teller of this story? In its technical sense, what is the point of view of the book? Is Steinbeck making any comment of his own through this story? What do you think he is saying?

6. Why do you think so much stress is placed on the importance of the canoe to Kino in the opening chapter?

7. Chapter 2 opens with a description of the mirages commonly occurring over the Gulf (18, 19, 25). Why do you think this theme is stressed by Steinbeck? How does it relate to the pearl?

8. Compare the description of the pearl when Kino first found it (25) with the description of it when he finally threw it back into the sea (117). Had the pearl really changed in appearance? How do you explain this?

9. Steinbeck told his story in chronological sequence, that is, he related each incident in the order in which it actually happened. Pick out the main events that happened in each chapter.

10. Sometimes an author prepares his reader for events that will happen later in the story. This is called foreshadowing. See how many examples you can find of incidents that point to important happenings later on. For example, when Juana says of the pearl (50), "It will destroy us all, even our son," she is speaking of a possibility that actually happens later in the story. Find other examples.

11. At the bottom of page 3, the author describes the activity of some ants which "Kino watched with the detachment of God." Later, when Kino is running away, ants are again introduced into the story (92). This time Kino allows them to climb over his foot. Why do you think Steinbeck introduced these details?

12. In common with most good writers, Steinbeck uses words that convey special meanings, connotative words, images and symbols to create moods and express ideas. For example, in the very beginning of the story when the author is describing the contentment of Kino within his family circle (3), Kino steps outside "and a goat came near and sniffed at him and stared with its cold yellow eyes." In ancient mythology the goat was a symbol of mischief, so this incident may be regarded as symbolic of the harm that comes to Kino when he steps outside the protective influence of his people, and defies the Spanish authorities. What other symbols can you find in the story?

13. When Steinbeck is writing about the evil in the town stirred up by Kino's discovery of the pearl, he says (30) "the black distillate was like the scorpion, or like hunger in the smell of food, or like loneliness when love is withheld. The poison sacs of the town began to manufacture venom, and the town swelled and puffed with the pressure of it." What kind of language is this? How does it increase the effectiveness of the story? What other examples can you find in the story?

14. What kind of person is the doctor? How did you form your opinion? Find character-revealing passages in the story.

15. Is the priest a bad man? Why does "the music of evil" sound when he enters, even though it is "faint and weak"?

16. Read the description of the pearl dealer (61). What sort of details make you suspect that he is a phony?

17. You have already discussed Kino's character as it is revealed at the beginning of the story. At what point do you notice the first change in Kino? In what other ways did he change? What has happened to him by the end of the story?

18. Just before he leaves his brother's hut, Kino says, "This pearl has become my soul. If I give it up I shall lose my soul."(87) At the

end of the story, the author describes Kino as a "a terrible machine" (113), and as he and Juana return to the town after Coyotito's death, he says, "their legs moved a little jerkily, like well-made wooden dolls." (116) Why did the author choose these descriptions? Is the author suggesting that he lost his soul by keeping the pearl? This is an example of irony. Can you find any other examples of irony in the story?

19. As in all good novels, there are elements of conflict in this story. Can you identify the major conflict. What other conflicts are present? Does good or evil triumph? Does this tell you anything about the author's attitude?

20. Some short stories are longer than this novel. Obviously something other than the length of the work determines that it is a novel. How does this work differ from a short story?

21. In his introduction, Steinbeck says this story may be a parable. Do you think it is? Think back to the parables you read last year before you make a decision. If you think it is, what is its message?

Suggestions for Composition

1. The way people act in a crisis is sometimes surprising. When the scorpion slid down the rope toward Coyotito in his cradle, Juana "repeated an ancient magic to guard against such evil, and on top of that she muttered a Hail Mary." We might have expected her to cry hysterically when the baby was stung by the creature. But she didn't. She was the calm, efficient, practical one who grabbed and the baby and promptly sucked the poison from the puncture, while "Kino hovered; he was helpless, he was in the way." You may have had an opportunity to watch people faced with a sudden emergency, or you may have been faced with one yourself. Describe the incident, and show how someone acted as a result.

2. In the opening paragraphs of The Pearl Steinbeck uses a great many details to help the reader see the kind of place that Kino lives in. Read the first two paragraphs again paying special attention to the kind of things he mentions that suggest Kino's background of poverty, the climate, and the location. Think of details you could mention to make a reader "see" your street on a summer evening. Here are some suggestions:

garden hoses swirling and hissing
the smell of charcoal and barbecued meat
boats on trailers pulling in driveways
the sound of portable radios
people weeding their flowerbeds

Add more details of your own that will suggest summer, and evening activities, then write a paragraph describing your street on a summer evening.

3. After the doctor's visit to Coyotito's baby, Steinbeck inserts a paragraph about the fishes in the estuary (p. 42). Read it again. Why do you think the author uses this detail here? What is the significance of the last sentence about the mice and the hawks? Write a paragraph explaining what you think Steinbeck expects us to understand after reading this passage.

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

PART I - DRAMA

THE ONE-ACT PLAY: A NIGHT AT AN INN (Dunsany)

Literature Curriculum II

Student Version

Introduction

You have read several different types of storied literature in this course, such as ballads and other narrative verse, short stories, first person narratives of true adventure, and novels. This unit will introduce you to still another storied form, drama or the play. Drama is as old as mankind. When the caveman reenacted in front of his fire the exciting moments of his hunt, that was drama. When little children play house, or otherwise pretend to be adults, that is drama. For drama is the acting-out of an incident.

Drama is different from the other forms of literature you have studied in that it is meant to be acted. A story or a poem or a novel is written by the author and read by the reader. There is a direct communication between the two. But a play is written by an author to be acted by an actor in front of an audience, and so the communication between writer and audience is filtered through the middle-man, or actor.

Another difference that you will notice results from the first. If a play is meant to be acted, it has to take place in a theater. Everything that the author of a story tells you must appear on the page; but the author of a play, or the director, can use make-up, costumes, lighting, music and other sound effects, and many other means of creating his effects. Consequently, when you read a play in a book, you will find comparatively little description of setting or action or tone of voice, and you will find that the play consists mostly of dialogue. This requires the reader to use his imagination to supply all the things that would be there if he were actually in the theater seeing and hearing the play performed.

The author of a play has a story to tell, but it is told through the words and actions of men and women on a stage. As you read the plays in this unit, remember that they were intended to be seen and heard by an audience. For this reason they must be told in a manner different from the narrative literature you have already studied. Notice the way in which the playwright handles this problem. What other types of literature do these plays remind you of? After you have read the plays through once, you will want to go back over them carefully as you consider the study questions, which will form the basis for class discussion with your teacher.

I. A Night at an Inn

The Author

Lord Dunsany was an Irish poet and playwright who was a contemporary of W. B. Yeats, J. M. Synge and George Bernard Shaw. He was born in 1878 and educated at Eton, a famous school for boys, and Sandhurst, the English equivalent of West Point. He saw active service with the historic Coldstream Guards during the South African war, was wounded in the Dublin riots, and later fought in the trenches during World War I.

He was more interested in ideas than in people, and he wrote plays that were fast moving and packed with action. A Night at an Inn is a one-act play of this type. Although most of his plays were written for the Irish theater, this one was first produced in New York in 1916.

Study Questions

1. In common with all stories, this one has a beginning, a middle, and an end. In narrative literature, the author tells his readers all the necessary background details for the understanding of the story. How does the playwright introduce his story? What are the devices used in this play?

2. Who is the chief character in the play? What kind of person is he? How is his character revealed to the audience? What is his real name? Do you know very much about him? Why or why not?

3. Who are Bill, Albert, and Sniggers? Are they separately drawn characters? How much do you know about them? Does Dunsany's treatment of these characters give you a clue about the author's purpose?

4. At what point does the action of the play begin? Which is the most exciting moment of the play? Everything that happens between these two incidents is the middle part of the play. How has the author kept the audience interested during this time?

5. Sometimes we can draw a diagram to help us understand how the author has gradually worked the events of his play toward the climax. This way we see very clearly how one incident leads on to the next, always in an upward direction because each action must be more interesting, more exciting than the one before it, until the climax is reached. Then the play falls swiftly to a conclusion. Look back through the play, and beginning with the point where the sailors leave with the

ruby, list each incident in order. Where do you think the climax comes? Draw a diagram of the action of the play.

6. When Sniggers, who has been sent out for water, returns terrified, what are you expecting to happen? What is your reaction when the idol walks in? How has the playwright helped the audience to accept this obviously impossible situation?

7. How do you feel about the ending? Is it a satisfying one? What saves it from being pure horror?

8. Before you began reading this play, you were asked what other types of literature it reminded you of. Can you answer that question now?

9. When you read other types of literature, you were asked to comment upon the author's point of view. Does a play have a "point of view"? Can you explain this?

10. Sometimes an author does make his opinions felt in an indirect way. The subject he chooses to write about, the way he handles it, the outcome of the story may all be indications of his own ideas. Do you feel the presence of the author at all in this play? What does he seem to be saying?

11. You discussed a writer's use of irony when you studied the novel. This is a device often used by a playwright too. Can you find examples of irony in this play?

12. Suspense is often heightened by both contrast and conflict. Can you find examples of both used by the author?

13. Drama is divided into two major classes, comedies and tragedies. How would you classify this play? Does it really fit either class?

14. What is this play about? Is it merely an entertaining story about criminals who were punished, or is there an idea behind it all? If so, what do you think it is?

14. You were asked before you read the play to notice ways in which drama differs from other forms of literature. What did you notice as you studied this play?

<u>Suggested Activities and Exercises</u>

1. With three other people, prepare to read the play aloud in class. Go through it carefully first, and decide exactly how to say each line to make it most effective.

2. Go to the library and find other plays by Dunsany. Make a list of titles that you think other class members might be interested in. Select one play and read it, either by yourself or aloud with a group.

3. Find all the places in the play where mention is made of the idol. Write a paragraph describing it as you imagine it to look.

4. The sailors believed that unless they killed all three priests of the idol, as long as the ruby remained in their possession, they, their children and their grandchildren, would be pursued. Many superstitions were connected with the robbing of pagan shrines and temples. Have you heard of the curse of the Pharaohs? See what you can find from the library about some of these superstitions, and prepare an oral report for the class.

*5. The horrors we imagine are often more terrible than something we actually see. Would the play have been more effective dramatically if the idol had not actually appeared? Discuss this and give your reasons. Imagine you are the producer of this play. How would you handle the entrance and appearance of this idol to achieve the greatest effect? You will need to discuss lighting, costuming, positioning and so forth.

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

PART II - DRAMA

THE ONE-ACT PLAY: TRIFLES (Susan Glaspell)

Literature Curriculum II

Student Version

Introduction

A Night at an Inn was a one-act play by an English author that contained a great deal of action. Trifles, another one-act play, is written by an American author, and although it contains very little action, the story will keep you extremely interested. As you read it, see if you can find how it differs from the first play, and what techniques the author uses to maintain interest.

The Author

Susan Glaspell was born in 1882 in Davenport, Iowa. Even as a child she liked to write. After her graduation from Drake University she worked as a reporter for an Iowa newspaper but gave it up two years later to write for herself. Trifles is a play she wrote for her director-husband to use with the Provincetown Players. It is based on an incident that actually happened which she was still a reporter, and an Iowa farm house is the setting for the play.

Study Questions

1. What did the title suggest to you when you first heard it? Now that you have read the play, do you think it was a good choice? Give your reasons.

2. What is the play about? Does it have a subject on the level of ideas as well as being about people?

3. Drama, by its very nature, has no technical point of view, as you discovered with A Night at an Inn. This play, however, presents more than one point of view. Each character, of course, has a separate point of view, but by sympathy they divide into two opposing groups. Can you identify them and say how they differ?

4. Do you detect the author's attitude in this play? How do you think she feels about Mrs. Wright? What evidence can you find to support your opinion?

5. How is the story introduced to the audience? In what way is the setting appropriate to the subject? How does it establish the mood for what is to follow?

6. The action of the play takes place in the middle section. Where does the action begin? At what point does the play reach its final climax?

7. Do you feel satisfied with the ending? How else could the play have ended? What factors helped influence the direction the ending took?

8. Who is the chief character in the play?

9. What kind of person is Mr. Henderson, the county attorney? How do you know?

10. How much do you know about the other characters in the play, Mr. and Mrs. Hale, Mr. and Mrs. Peters? Why do you not know more?

11. Compared with A Night at an Inn, very little action takes place on stage in this play. How has the author kept the audience interested?

12. You discussed irony in connection with the title of the play. In fact the tone of the play throughout is ironic. What other examples of irony can you find?

13. Find details in the play that were intended to arouse your sympathy for Mrs. Wright.

14. If you were to draw a diagram showing how the play gradually worked up to a climax, what would it look like?

15. As in most good literature, the suspense in Trifles is heightened by conflict. Can you identify the major conflict in the play? What other minor conflicts can you find?

16. Compare the techniques used in this play with those used in short stories. What is the major difference between the two types of literature?

17. As the play progresses, you are able to piece together quite detailed pictures of both Mr. and Mrs. Wright. Using only what you have learned in the play, how would you describe them?

18. Look carefully through the play and gather all the evidence you can find about the death. Are you sure by the end of the play that Mrs. Wright murdered her husband? Why or why not? What kind of evidence is produced in the play? Is it conclusive proof of her guilt?

Suggested Activities and Exercises

1. Imagine you are a newspaper reporter assigned to the case. Write a story for the paper that gives the verdict, and then tell the most interesting parts of the trial.

2. Discuss the case in a group. Then dramatize for the class the closing day of the trial. Have the prosecuting attorney's summary of the case against Mrs. Wright, and the defense attorney's final speech defending her. Let the jury withdraw, and then return in the next scene with their verdict.

3. In this play some important evidence was suppressed. Stage a debate with one person giving the legal viewpoint and the other justifying the suppression of evidence.

4. Justice is always represented as being blindfolded. Does an impartial law always best serve the innocent? Write a few short paragraphs giving your views on the morality of suppressing evidence, even assuming the accused to be innocent. What would happen to the law if everyone did this?

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

FORM

PART ONE: DEFINITION

Literature Curriculum II

Student Version

Introduction

The word form can mean many things. For our purposes, one helpful way of using it is to say that it refers to the manner in which things are shaped or arranged or put together when we set about making something. A lump of clay which we may be idly poking or smoothing begins to assume form when we deliberately set about shaping it into something which, though made of clay, is more than just plain clay itself. We form letters into words when we decide to arrange them in a particular order. The act of forming or making a house consists of putting together all of the materials we need, making sure that each is in its proper place in relationship to all the others. And form is a word which can apply to more than physical objects. A ball game takes form when a group of children who have been casually throwing and batting a ball around decide to choose up sides, assign positions, and arrange the activities of throwing, catching, batting, and running according to certain rules and relationships. And any work of literature has form because a writer has decided to make something--a poem, a play, an essay and so on--by putting together language (and all the things language can stand for in a particular way.

When you studied several kinds of stories, one of the things you were asked to think about was their form. For instance, when you distinguished between stories in prose and in verse, you were doing so mainly because of the way in which sounds and words and sentences were put together in each of these two general kinds of writing. And when you thought about the plot of a story, you were really thinking about its form--the order in which events happened, the point at which the story began and the point at which it ended, the places where the author chose to stop for a while in his account of what was actually going on and to tell us something about the characters or describe the setting in which events took place.

Now you will be reading some non-storied works, in which the authors will not be trying to tell you about a series of occurrences but in which they will be attempting to describe many kinds of things, to convince you, to offer you information, or to say what they believe to be true about many kinds of questions. You will probably feel that in non-storied writing there doesn't seem to be any "action," that is, that people aren't performing deeds and undergoing experiences, that there are no heroes or villains, and that, since there isn't any plot, it's difficult to talk about the form of the writing--that is about the way in which it is put together. But it may be helpful to remember that in non-storied as in storied writings, something is always happening. The writer is constantly in action, attempting to make something clear to you, using whatever means seem best to him. He can do this by giving you definitions or examples, by comparing one thing with another, by pulling things apart and putting them together again--so

that in non-storied writings, just as in stories, something is always going on. Furthermore, the order in which things go on, the way in which each part of such a writing is shaped and related to other parts--in other words, the form which the author chooses to give what he is saying--is just as important in non-storied as in storied works of literature.

It isn't hard to see why these questions of order and emphasis are important. Even in our everyday speaking and writing, what we say "makes sense" because it has a certain order, because, usually without being conscious of it, we impose form on what we are saying. And when we deliberately try to make things clear to other people, we are very much concerned with form, whether we think about it or not. If you were asked to describe an automobile to someone who knew nothing about cars, you would not be likely to begin by telling him all about the door-handles, nor would you, in any case, devote as much time to door handles as to a description, say, of the motor and how it works or of the way the whole car looks. You would attempt to place some form on your description, Perhaps you would try merely to tell him the most important things about a car--the things which make it "special" and set it apart from anything else in the world. If this were so, you would make your statement as some kind of definition, and your wish to say only the most important things about a car would determine the form in which you put things.

Or you might want to say a good deal more about automobiles, the many kinds and models there are, their different parts, their appearance, the way they perform, and so on--so that you would divide your own discussion into various parts, and it would take the form of division and classification. Or if someone asked you what we mean by a "good sport," you might find it difficult to describe good sportsmanship without showing some real instances in which good sportsmanship had been or might have been displayed, so that the form of your account would, in this case, be that of examples Or, still again, if you wished to describe the flavor of pears or pork chops, perhaps the best way to go about it would be to suggest other tastes which resembled (or perhaps were very different from) the flavor you wanted to describe; in this case, the form of your discussion would be that of comparison and contrast.

Some authors tell stories; all authors tell something. They tell what people and places and experiences and ideas are like. They tell what they believe or what they want us to believe. They tell us what they think will please us or interest us or make us wiser or more sympathetic. And clearly the way in which things are told, the order and the emphasis by whic whatever is said is given form, has a lot to do with whether we will be interested or pleased or instructed or convinced. Many of these ways of telling things are similar enough to one another so that we can group them together under a common label like definition or example. But even though

we can use such a label to describe the general way in which a writer has gone about his job, we should remember that each job is somehow different from all the others, that each work is designed to strike us in its own special way. When, therefore, you read the selections in this unit of work, you should not only notice the resemblances between various forms but should also recognize that forms which seem very similar can be used for very different kinds of purposes.

PART ONE: DEFINITION

When we "define" something we may try to make someone else understand how it looks or sounds or, perhaps, tastes or smells. We may try to explain how something works or how this or that job ought to be done. We may try to express our own feelings about things--everyday things like strawberry slush or baseball, or quite serious and hard-to-grasp things like bravery or honesty. We define a subject, no matter what it may be, when we try to communicate <u>our</u> understanding of it to someone else.

Suppose someone said after you returned from a vacation, "Tell me about San Francisco." If he knew absolutely nothing about the city, you would probably have to tell him of its location in Northern California on a bay, its size, perhaps its importance as a center of trade, and so on--and this would be a definition. But, more probably, you would want to start telling him about the flower stalls, the smelly dried fish in Chinatown, and the way the white buildings shine in the sun when you view the city from across the water. If, through your words, he could see and feel about these things as you did, <u>then</u> he would begin to know what San Francisco is really like. And this, too, would be another kind of definition.

There are many other ways of defining things. Some of them are used in the readings which follow, and, from these readings, you should be able to store up a variety of "tactics" to use in defining, in letting others know what things are "really like."

I. Anglo-Saxon Riddle #32, translated by Burton Raffel

Ever since we were children, we have all liked riddles. "When is a door not a door?" Jack might ask Jill. And Jill might counter with "What's red and white on the outside and gray on the inside?" The Anglo-Saxons, early inhabitants of England, were especially fond of charms, runes, and riddles; they constructed several to puzzle their friends with--and they did so in poetry.

The first poem that you will read in this unit will be one of these early riddles. Since it first appeared in a language now no longer spoken, you are reading a translation. But it is a good one. See if you can guess from the clues what the object is. Only one hint will be given here: the subject of this riddle--as is the subject of nearly all--is close to the everyday life of the people for whom it was originally intended.

Riddle #32

(For selection, see Anglo-Saxon Riddle #32: "A Ship" translated by Burton Raffel from Poems from the Old English 2nd Rev. Ed., copyright 1964, University of Nebraska Press.)

Study Questions

1. What is the answer to the riddle? At what point did you begin to guess? What were your clues? At what point were you quite certain you knew the subject of the riddle?

2. If the riddle is a good one, then everything that is said about the "strange machine" or "monster" also refers to something about the real subject of the riddle. What do you suppose is really meant by shrieking? By an open country? By its mouth in its middle? By its belly?

3. Since we cannot completely understand the whole poem unless we know the meaning of every word, can you give the meaning of abundance? Of tribute? Of unravel?

4. Riddles are fun, of course, but perhaps the man who wrote this one wanted to do more than simply entertain us with a puzzle to be solved. How do you think he feels about the real subject of the riddle? Does he admire it? Dislike it? Fear it? Or does he simply tell us about it in language which doesn't reflect any feelings about it at all? Point to particular words or phrases that help you to answer this question.

5. Definitions--even in riddles--tell us what things look like and sound like, where they are to be found, how they operate or what they do. How many of these things can you discover in this riddle--and where

6. We have already referred to this riddle as a poem. What makes it a poem rather than a piece of prose?

7. The poem begins with a general statement which does not seem to have anything directly to do with the riddle that follows it. Is it an appropriate beginning? Can you see some sort of relationship between this statement and the subject of the riddle? Perhaps it will be helpful for you to re-state what's said in the opening lines, using your own words.

8. In the first six or eight lines of the poem there are a number of detai about the "machine" or "monster." Circle the words which seem to describe the "monster" as it is seen in this part of the poem: beautiful, strange, frightening, graceful, useful, purposeful, intelligent.

9. But, toward the end of the poem, there seems to be a change in attitude toward the monster and we are asked to see it in a different way. Where does that change occur? Circle the words which now best describe the monster as it appears in the latter part of the poem: beautiful, frightening, strange, graceful, useful, faithful, selfish, ugly.

10. Like any poet, the man who made this riddle chose his words very carefully. There isn't any very strict rhyme, but can you detect w. ys in which sounds are repeated? Can you find repetition in the lines: "I saw a strange machine, made/ For motion, slide against the sand"? Why is this repetition like rhyme? Why is is different from rhyme?

11. One way of discussing the form of this riddle is to divide it into parts. How many parts do you find in it--and where does each begin and end? Could you describe which each of these parts does?

12. Look up the dictionary definition of the word which is the subject of the riddle. What does the dictionary supply that is missing in the riddle? What does the riddle supply which the dictionary does not?

II. "Gaiety," from Platero and I, Juan Ramón Jiménez

You have seen how one writer has defined an object by making you do the work in puzzling out the answer to his riddle. Often, though you will be asked to define things that you cannot easily see or touch. How could you tell someone else what sadness, or anger, or happiness might be? You cannot see them or touch them--yet you know they exist.

Charlie Brown and Lucy have shown us one way. "Happiness," they have said, "is a warm puppy." Or a chain of paper clips. And Snoopy might add that it's a filled water dish. Do you see what they are doing? They are pinning down something we cannot see or touch (something we could call abstract or intangible subjects) by saying that such values are summed up in things we know well--can touch, smell, or hear.

Such a plan is followed in the next selection by Juan Ramón Jiménez, a Spaniard who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1956. Before you read the next selection you should know that it is taken from Platero and I, a small book written by the man about his small donkey named Platero. This passage is a definition of gaiety, something that you know but cannot see or touch. But notice how Platero and his friends make you know what it is like.

Gaiety

(For selection see passage beginning "Platero plays with Diana...." and ending "...of barking and the tinkling of bells." from "Gaiety" by Juan Ramón Jiménez, from Platero and I: An Andalusian Elegy, translated by William and Mary Roberts, The New American Library, 1960.)

Study Questions

1. What kinds of particular or concrete things are used to describe gaiety? To which of our senses do they appeal -- that is, are they sounds, sights, smells, things to be tasted or touched? What part is played by each of the following elements in the essay: How the animals and children look; how they act; the sounds they make; what they think about?

2. The first sentence of the little essay doesn't say anything much about gaiety. Which of the following statements seems to describe most accurately its relationship to the rest of the essay:
   a. It tells you where and when the events that follow are suppose to take place.
   b. It states, in very general terms, the activity which is about to be described in much more particular detail.
   c. It gives the first example of gaiety, which is going to be follow by a series of similar examples, although each is different in some ways from the others.
   d. It talks about Platero, playing with the other animals and children, and this playing is then contrasted with the teasing and mock-fighting which is next described.
   e. It gives the reason or cause for the different kinds of action which are described in the rest of the essay.

3. How can a dog be like a crescent moon? A goat be as coquettish as a woman? A donkey be like a toy?

4. In what ways is the last paragraph of the essay different from all the paragraphs which have preceded it? Do you think it makes an appropriate ending? Why?

5. What do the following phrases have in common: pretends to bite his nose; charges at her gently; pulling with her teeth; butts him in the head; pretends to break into a trot? In what way do they help to define gaiety for us?

6. How satisfactory do you think it would be if the piece were not called Gaiety but Contentment or Happiness or Pleasure?

7. Why does the essay speak only of children and animals--no grown-ups?

8. In what ways does Platero seem different from the other animals and children? Is he as gay as they are?

9. The essay is not, strictly speaking, a definition of gaiety, certainly not, at least, anything like the kind of definition one would find in a dictionary. Could you suggest two or three abstract words (general words, that is, like gaiety itself) which describe what the author seems to think contributes to gaiety?

III. From Cyrano de Bergerac, Edmond Rostand

Long ago in the France of Louis XIV there lived a man named Cyrano de Bergerac, a magnificent swordsman, poet, and wit. But he had one peculiarity: an extremely long nose. About two hundred years after his death another Frenchman, Edmond Rostand, wrote a play about him, lengthening very slightly his reputation and his nose.

At one point in the play, a rather stupid fellow, wishing to insult proud Cyrano, walks over and sneers, "Your nose, sir, is... rather large." Now, as insults go, that's pretty weak. So Cyrano replies with the comments that the fellow could have made.

CYRANO

Ah, no, young sir!
You are too simple, Why, you might have said--
Oh, a great many things! Mon dieu, why waste
Your opportunity? For example, thus:--
AGGRESSIVE: I, sir, if that nose were mine,
I'd have it amputated--on the spot!
FRIENDLY: How do you drink with such a nose?
You ought to have a cup made specially.
DESCRIPTIVE: 'Tis a rock--a crag--a cape--
A cape? say rather, a peninsula!
INQUISITIVE: What is that receptacle--
A razor-case or a portfolio?
KINDLY: Ah, do you love the little birds
So much that when they come and sing to you,
You give them this to perch on? INSOLENT:
Sir, when you smoke, the neighbors must suppose
Your chimney is on fire. CAUTIOUS: Take care--
A weight like that might make you topheavy.
THOUGHTFUL: Somebody fetch my parasol--
Those delicate colors fade so in the sun!
PEDANTIC: Does not Aristophanes
Mention a mythologic monster called
Hippocamelephantocamelos?
Surely we have here the original!

FAMILIAR: Well, old torchlight! Hang your hat
Over that chandlier--it hurts my eyes.
ELOQUENT: When it blows, the typhoon howls,
And the clouds darken. DRAMATIC: When it bleeds--
The Red Sea! ENTERPRISING: What a sign
For some perfumer! LYRIC Hark--the horn
Of Roland calls to summon Charlemagne!--
SIMPLE: When do they unveil the monument?
RESPECTFUL: Sir, I recognize in you
A man of parts, a man of prominence--
RUSTIC: Hey? What? Call that a nose? Na, na--
I be no fool like what you think I be--
That there's a blue cucumber! MILITARY:
Point against cavalry! PRACTICAL: Why not
A lottery with this for the grand prize?
Or--parodying Faustus in the play--
"Was this the nose that launched a thousand ships
And burned the topless towers of Ilium?"
These, my dear sir, are things you might have said
Had you some tinge of letters, or of wit
To color your discourse. But wit, --not so,
You never had an atom--and of letters,
You need but three to write you down--an Ass.

Study Questions

1. We already know what a nose is--although noses the size of Cyrano's are pretty rare. If we were to call the passage you have read "Defintion of a Nose," Would this really give an adequate description of what the passage is about? What else is being described or defined?

2. You will have noticed that each "character" has a name which is supposed to make what he says about the nose particularly appropriate. How is his speech appropriate to the character called FRIENDLY? What about INSOLENT? FAMILIAR?

3. If you do not know the meaning of PEDANTIC, consult the dictionary How does the speech of PEDANTIC show what this character is like? What does RUSTIC mean? How is RUSTIC's speech appropriate to his character? In your own experience--or through such means as watching television--have you run into "types" which resemble RUSTIC?

4. Since the statement by each "character" is a little speech in itself, each has its own modest "form." For example, the speech of DESCRIPTIVE compares with <u>rock</u> and end with <u>peninsula</u>? What difference would it make if the order were reversed?

5. The passage we are discussing is, of course, a part of a play and, as such, helps to move along the drama. But it also tells us something about the character of Cyrano as he produces his "definitions." What sort of man does the speech show him to be?

6. You will probably have noticed that each of the little speeches in the passage has its own special quality--that there is great variety, as we move from character to character. What are some of the things which are done to make each speech different from the other? You may want to consider such things as the kind of sentences which are used, the choice of words, the the length of each speech.

7. Though there is such variety in the speeches, they all have certain things in common, both in their basic subject and, in the most general sense, in the form they adopt. You will surely have no trouble in seeing what the subject is, but can you say anything about their broad similarity in form?

8. The passage contains at least one clever pun, when Cyrano insults his enemy by saying, "Of letters, you need but three to write you down--an Ass." With the dictionary's help, if you need it, describe the two meanings of letters on which the pun is based.

9. Students of literature are much interested in the sources of humor--the question of the kind of thing that makes us laugh. You will probably agree that Cyrano's speech is largely humorous. Can you offer any general observation as to what strikes us as funny both in the passage as a whole and in its particular parts?

IV. "Tiger," from The Bestiary, translated by T. H. White.

Books of definitions have been with us for hundreds of years. One such, called a bestiary, a book defining various types of beasts, was especially popular during the Middle Ages. You will read the definition of a tiger inserted in one ancient bestiary. However, you will not be reading it in its original form, Latin. Instead, you will read a translation done by T. H. White, the man who wrote The Once and Future King, a book you may have read.

You have already seen a few ways definitions can be handled. Now see on your own how the tiger is defined.

(For selection beginning "Tigris the Tiger gets his name...." and ending "...her revenge and her baby." see T. H. White's translation of "Tiger" from The Bestiary, A Book of Beasts, pp. 12-13, copyright 1960 by G. P. Putnam's Sons, Capricorn Books.)

Study Questions

1. This is the first definition you have studied which attempts to explain how something got its name. The history of a word, its origin and developing uses, is called its etymology and, particularly in the larger dictionaries, etymologies are included in the definition of any word. Assuming that the etymology of tiger that is given here is correct (and it is only fair to tell you that we today know it is not), what does it tell us about how the names of things develop? Can you think of other reasons why the etymology of a word can be both interesting and useful?

2. How did the River Tigris get its name? Does this information help in any way, our understanding of what a tiger is?

3. The "definition" also tells us about the tiger's principal home. How useful is such geographical information in telling us about the tiger? Can you think of kinds of words in defining which it would not be useful--or even possible--to offer such information?

4. By far the largest part of this "definition" describes what happens when someone steals a tiger cub from its mother. This is almost a separate little essay. Can you think of a title for it? Do you think it helps us to understand anything about tigers?

5. The final paragraph of the "definition" describes what a mother tiger does under certain circumstances. Do you think any such description is useful in a definition? Can you think of other activities of a tiger which might be described to give us more useful general information about the animal?

6. How much of this entire account of the tiger is true or accurate, do you suppose? Even assuming it is all true, how useful would the account be in a class in zoology?

7. Perhaps the closest the"definition" comes to what we might expect to find in a dictionary is the sentence which begins the second paragraph and tells how a tiger "can be distinguished." What aspects of the tiger are used for distinguishing him here? Are they equally satisfactory means of distinguishing him? Can you suggest other, more reliable means of distinguishing such an animal from other creatures?

8. Assuming that the "definition" is neither very accurate nor very useful in helping us to understand what a tiger is, are there other reasons why it is interesting and worthwhile to read?

9. Each paragraph in the "definition" tells us a different "kind" of thing about the tiger. Set down in a few words the kind of thing with which each paragraph is concerned and place them in the order in which they appear in the definition. Does the order seem a good one? Would it make any difference if you juggled it around or reversed it? Compare the order of this account with the order of things in a dictionary definition. Do they have anything in common?

10. The description of the mother tiger whose cub has been stolen can be seen as a little story. At the end, the author speaks about why it is that the mother loses both her revenge and her baby. Can you explain "the zeal of her own dutifulness" in your own words?

11. In the final sentence, the author explains why the tigress "loses out" in language which suggests that we might learn a lesson from her--that the story might be treated as a fable, like those of Aesop. If you wished to construct a "moral" for the story, what would it be?

V. From the speech of acceptance for the Nobel Prize, William Faulkner

In a speech that he gave when he was presented with the Nobel Prize for Literature, the American writer William Faulkner defined a subject well suited for the occasion: a good writer. Notice the way that he tells us what a good writer is; his strategy is not the same as the bestiarist's in defining a tiger.

"The Spirit of Man"
William Faulkner

(For selection beginning "I feel that this award...." and ending "...to help him endure and prevail," see William Faulkner's "The Spirit of Man", from the Nobel Prize acceptance speech. Reprinted from The Faulkner Reader, copyright 1954 by Random House, Inc.)

Study Questions

1. Because almost every word in this speech is of importance, we should have an accurate understanding of everything Faulkner says. What is the meaning of commensurate? Ephemeral? Doomed? Compassion?

2. Faulkner's speech has been grouped with other writings in this course, all of which are, in some sense, definitions. What do you think Faulkner is defining? Circle the phrase, among the following, which seems to you to describe most satisfactorily the subject of Faulkner's definition: the Nobel Prize; the nature of fear; literature; the writer; the good writer; the duty of the writer. (There is probably no single "right" answer here, although some responses are certainly closer to the facts than others. The important thing is to look closely at the text and be prepared to offer sound reasons for the answer you select!)

3. You probably feel--and quite properly--that Faulkner's "definition," no matter how you describe it, is very different from all of the other definitions you have read in this section. See if you can explain to your own satisfaction what seems to be the most important difference between Faulkner's speech and the other materials you have read. Then, as an exercise, place a circle around the one statement among the following which, you feel, describes the most distinctive thing about Faulkner's definition:

   a. Faulkner uses much more difficult words than the other writers.
   b. Unlike any of the other writers, Faulkner talks about what is "abstract," about things we cannot touch or see but only feel.
   c. Unlike the other writers, Faulkner is quite as fully concerned about what "ought to be" as what is the fact.
   d. Unlike the other writers, Faulkner has composed a speech, intended for oral delivery.
   e. Unlike the other writers, Faulkner lets us know how he feels about his subject rather than giving an entirely "objective," uncolored account.

4. Do you think it is accurate to say that Faulkner's first paragraph is chiefly about himself? If not, what is it chiefly about?

5. In the second paragraph Faulkner says that "there are no longer problems of the spirit." Why do you suppose that the question, "When will I be blown up?" is not a problem of the spirit?

6. The third paragraph begins, "He must learn them again." To what do the words <u>he</u> and <u>them</u> refer?

7. In his final paragraph, Faulkner tells us that he "declines to accept the end of man." What does he accept instead?

8. You should see that, however we define Faulkner's "subject," he proceeds to give us his opinion on several topics. What are these topics--and what is Faulkner's opinion in each case?

9. In this speech, on a notable occasion, Faulkner has chosen to make a statement about "our tragedy today." To whom does <u>our</u> refer? What is this statement doing in the speech--that is, how is it related to the principal things Faulkner is trying to say?

10. Faulkner was famous--and won the Nobel Prize--for his <u>novels</u>. How do you account for the fact that his final sentence talks about the <u>poet's</u> voice?

11. In your own language, indicate what Faulkner believes about "the young man or woman writing today," pointing out both what is wrong with today's writing and the reasons Faulkner gives to account for this.

12. Faulkner complains about writers who "leave no scars." What do you suppose, in the light of his general argument, he means by this phrase?

13. What do you think Faulkner would say about the following statement?

> The writer is free to write about anything he chooses. His only duty is to write accurately and eloquently.

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

FORM

PART TWO: EXAMPLE

Literature Curriculum II

Student Version

ghts Reserved

I. Christopher Morley, "Smells"

Christopher Morley was a journalist, a poet, and a playwright. He enjoyed playing with words and usually had fun with them. This little poem is representative of the verses he wrote.

Before reading the poem, look at it to observe its form on the page. How many lines are there in each stanza? Which stanza is the exception to the pattern of the others?

(For selection see Poems, by Christopher Morley, copyright 1919, 1947. Published by J. B. Lippincott Co.)

Study Questions

1. Why do you think the poet has given us a list of smells? Is he trying to make us believe something, see or feel something, remember something, learn something? At any point in the poem, does he directly tell us his intention?

2. What other words are used for smell? (Find three.)

3. Is it actually true that "woods breathe sweet"? Would you prefer the poem to say "woods smell sweet"? Why?

4. To fully understand the poem, you should know the words balsam, gramarye, and fumy. If you are not sure of their meanings, look them up.

5. The author has developed his subject by mentioning many of the smells he likes. How many are there? Has he grouped them in any way?

6. The poem begins with a question. Is this question ever answered? Can you think of any reason for asking a question which you do not intend to answer?

7. What purpose does the last line in the poem serve? Would the poem be complete without it? Why or why not? How does it affect the pattern of the poem?

II. H. Allen Smith, "Coping with the Compliment"

H. Allen Smith is a modern American humorist. His choice of title may raise a question in your mind: What is there about a complement that one must cope with? Of course, the author might have entitled his work "How to Receive a Compliment." Such a title, however, would not suggest the treatment which H. Allen Smith has given his subject. When you have finished reading the selection, see if you agree that the author's choice of title was a good one.

(For selection see H. Allen Smith's "Coping with the Compliment" from How to Write Without Knowing Nothing, copyright 1961 by Reader's Digest Association, pp. 113-119.)

Study Questions

1. Although this is an essay about familiar things, the author uses a number of somewhat unusual words. Among them are inept, ethereal, retort, cadence, sestet, execrable, adroit, paradoxes, inarticulate, smirk, comport, geophysicist, congeries, bridle, enhance, and derogation. For how many of these words can you supply a meaning without consulting the dictionary? (It is often possible to make an "intelligent guess" by considering the position and use of the word in the sentence in which it appears.) Consult your dictionary after you have done your best without it. Could the author have used simpler words to convey much the same meaning? If so, why did he choose more complicated and unusual ones?

2. Do you agree that "coping with a compliment" is a real problem? Do you think it is as serious as the author seems to? Is it possible that he is pretending that it is more serious than he actually believes?

3. As we have said, H. Allen Smith has a reputation as a humorist. Is this largely a humorous essay? What are the funniest things about it?

4. However humorous you find the essay, do you think the author is trying to make any serious point? If so, state the point in your own words.

5. The essay is, in large part, a series of little stories or examples. What general point is made by all of them? What further, particular points do they illustrate? That is, what particular point is made by the story of the lady who says, "This old rag?" By the little girl who shows off her dress, petticoat, and underpants? By the host, in the final story which the author borrows from Eliza W. Farrar?

6. The essay is written in the first-person--that is, by an "I" who tells us about his own thoughts and experiences. Could many of the same things be said in a third-person essay, in which no "I" appears? What advantages, if any, do you think have been gained by the use of the first-person?

7. On the basis of the examples the author has given, why do you think "thank you" is the best answer to a compliment?

III. Carl Sandburg, "Yarns" (excerpt from The People, Yes)

Born to poor Swedish immigrants in Illinois, Carl Sandburg early learned about poor work. Years later when he began to write poetry, he wrote about the common worker, and today he is recognized as the poet of the people. It is understandable that Sandburg, a native of Illinois and the poet of the ordinary man, would also be drawn to

Abraham Lincoln. Sandburg's great interest in Lincoln led him to collect and study material about the great President for thirty years and finally to write the finest of all the biographies of Lincoln.

Here is a selection from one of his poems, "The People, Yes." When you look at this poem on the printed page, you will notice that it looks different. When you begin to read it, you will notice other differences: no stanzas, unusual length of lines, no rhyme scheme, no definite pattern of rhythm. This kind of poetry is appropriately called <u>free verse</u>.

Because Carl Sandburg is a poet of the common people, he uses a simple language, one in which the vocabulary presents no problem to the reader. Two words, however, may be strange to some young people of today: <u>caboose</u> and <u>cyclone</u>. Be sure you know what they mean.

(For selection, see "Yarns" by Carl Sandburg, from <u>The People, Yes</u>, copyright 1936 Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., renewed, 1964, by Carl Sandburg, pp. 88-89.)

<u>Study Questions</u>

1. Each of the little stories Sandburg tells is what he calls a <u>yarn</u>. By thinking about what all of these examples have in common, can you define the kind of story which Sandburg thinks of as a <u>yarn</u>?

2. The larger poem, of which "Yarns" is a part, tries, among other things, to let the reader know what the American people are like. In what ways do you think "Yarns" helps to accomplish this? What do you think it tells us about the American people?

3. There are almost thirty "yarns" in this selection. Do you think Sandburg could have shortened his list and still "made his point"? Would you have advised him to do so?

4. Although Sandburg writes in the third-person (there is no "I" in these lines), is there anything about the poem which shows how he feels about the tales he tells us?

5. Can you say anything about the kind of subjects on which the yarns are generally based? Would it have been appropriate to include a yarn about a ghost? A movie star? A great ballplayer? A wonderfully fast horse? A mad scientist? A rocket to the moon?

IV. Walt Whitman, "Miracles"

Walt Whitman (1819-1892) was born into a poor family and left school at eleven to go to work. Before he became a poet, he was a journalist. His poetry shows his love of the common people and everyday things.

Before you read this poem think of what the word <u>miracle</u> means.

Miracles

Why! who makes much of a miracle?
As to me, I know of nothing else but miracles,
Whether I walk the streets of Manhattan,
Or dart my sight over the roofs of houses toward the sky,
Or wade with naked feet along the beach just in the edge of the water,
Or stand under trees in the woods,
Or sit at table at dinner with the rest,
Or look at strangers opposite me riding in the car,
Or watch honey-bees busy around the hive of a summer forenoon,
Or animals feeding in the fields,
Or birds - or the wonderfulness of insects in the air,
Or the wonderfulness of the sundown, or of stars shining so quiet and bright,
Or the exquisite, delicate thin curve of the new moon in spring;
These, with the rest, one and all, are to me miracles,
To me every hour of the light and dark is a miracle,
Every cubic inch of space is a miracle,
Every square yard of the surface of the earth is spread with the same,
Every foot of the interior swarms with the same,
To me the sea is a continual miracle,
The fishes that swim - the rocks - the motion of the waves - the ships with men in them,
What stranger miracles are there?

Study Questions

1. Can you quote the lines in which the poet states the chief subject of his poem? Re-state the subject in a sentence which begins with "Whitman believes that...."

2. Whitman has made groupings of examples of miracles. Look closely at the poem. Can you divide the miracles into groups of any kind?

3. Which poem we have read recently has a form similar to this? What do we call this type of verse? Does it seem appropriate for Whitman's purposes?

4. Most of us would agree that Whitman's "miracles" are generally found in simple and familiar things. Does he ever try, particularly in his use of words, to show what is uncommon or "miraculous" about these things? Can you find instances in which his language seems to be attempting this?

5. A famous poem by Whitman is called "Song of Myself." "Miracles," too, is a kind of song of myself," for it certainly tells us something about the poet. On the basis of this poem, what sort of man do you think the poet is?

6. The poem ends with a question. Could you say pretty much the same thing as Whitman does in a declarative sentence (by stating it as a fact, rather than a question)? What effect does the question have on you?

V. Robert P. Tristram Coffin, "Crystal Moment"

Robert P. Tristram Coffin was a New England writer. He wrote many types of literature but was most interested in teaching and in writing poetry. He once said that "Poetry is the art of putting different kinds of good things together: men and plows, boys and whistles, hounds and deer, sorrow and sympathy, life and death."

(For selection, see Collected Poems by Robert P. Tristram Coffin, Macmillan Company, p. 141.)

Study Questions

1. Although this poem describes a single experience and thus offers only one example, this example--like others you have studied--provides a particular illustration of a general statement. Can you locate the general statement in the poem? Is the statement entirely clear--or can you think of ways it might be re-worded or expanded?

2. Would the poem be more satisfactory if more than one example were given? When do you think one example can be as effective--or more so--than several?

3. What use has the author made of comparisons? Can you locate instances both of direct, explicit comparisons and of implicit comparisons (those in which the author does not use the word like but assumes that we can see how one thing resembles another)?

4. How much can you say about the "technical" poetic qualities of the poem? The rhyme-scheme? The stanzas? The length of lines? The dominant meter? Do you think the author's choices in these respects lead to particular effects?

5. What meaning do you attach to the word crystal in the title? Would a more satisfactory title be Unforgettable Moment or Magic Moment?

6. Coffin has attempted to describe a very "special" experience for us. What, in your own words, seems to account for its "special" quality? Can you think of experiences--perhaps of a very different kind--that have had similar importance for you?

7. Is the author asking us to feel sorry for the buck? Do you think the poem is an argument against hunting?

8. Compare this poem with Whitman's "Miracles." Which poem seems more concerned with stating the poet's beliefs? Do you think Whitman would react as Coffin has to this particular "crystal moment"? Do you think Coffin would agree with Whitman's definition of "miracles"? (Of course, we can only guess about these questions, for we can know for certain only what each poem tells us. But it is possible to talk about the attitudes toward common matters which the two poems seem to express.)

VI. Sara Teasdale "Barter"

Early in life Sara Teasdale developed an interest in poetry and had as her model and inspiration the English poetess Christina Rossetti, who had been recognized on the other side of the Atlantic as the greatest woman poet of her day. Although Sara Teasdale did not quite achieve the height attained by Rossetti, she was recognized as one of the strong voices among the poets of her day. All of her poems, of which this one is a representative example, show a great sensitivity to beauty.

(For selection entitled "Barter" see Love Songs by Sara Teasdale, from Collected Poems of Sara Teasdale, p. 97, The MacMillan Co.)

Study Questions

1. What does the title mean? What is the dictionary definition of the word? How does it fit into the use of sell and buy in other parts of the poem?

2. What are the things--we call them images in poetry--which the author associates with the loveliness life has to offer? Make a list of these images. Line eleven speaks of the "spirit's still delight." What, besides man's spirit, is delighted by loveliness?

3. What lines of the poem most completely state the point of view of the author? Can you state this attitude in a sentence of your own?

4. At what point does the author cease making statements about the loveliness of life and begin to urge the reader to buy? What change comes over the structure of the sentences here, making them different from those which precede them?

5. What does the author recommend as a fair price for loveliness? What is the price she would give for ecstasy? Does this conception of purpose fit into the meaning of the title?

6. Is the word ecstasy new to you? If it is, have you some idea of its meaning from its use here? Check your guess with the dictionary to be sure.

7. Like the poems by Whitman and Coffin, Miss Teasdale's verses deal with moments or aspects of experience in life which she finds particularly satisfying. We might say that she, too, is interested in the "miracles" which life offers to those who can appreciate them. In what ways does her point of view resemble those of the other two poets? In what ways is it different?

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

FORM

PART THREE: COMPARISON/CONTRAST

Literature Curriculum II

Student Version

Student Version

Comparison/ Contrast

INTRODUCTION

Trying to tell people what things are like is often hard. Sometimes it is very helpful to compare one thing with another. In trying to tell another about a center on the high school football team, one fellow might say "He's as strong as an ox!" Instantly the hearer begins to sense what that player is like: he's probably very wide; he can very likely crush an orange with his bare hands; he probably has a very thick neck.

Without stating it to himself, the speaker has gone through a very normal process, comparison. It's the same process somebody might use when saying that mean old Miss Grundy in the fifth grade was as sour as a lemon. Can you think of any others?

Writers often use this same device, though in more complex ways, to communicate a certain idea or feeling to the reader. Look at this poem:

I like to see it lap the miles
And lick the valleys up
And stop to feed itself at tanks
And then, prodigious, step

Around a pile of mountains,
And, supercilious, peer
In shanties by the sides of roads,
And then a quarry pare

To fit its sides
And crawl between
Complaining all the while
In horrid, hooting stanza,
Then chase itself down hill

And neigh like Boanerges
Then, prompter than a star,
Stop, docile and omnipotent,
At its own stable door.

What are the two things being compared? Do you see how Emily Dickinson has carried through the point-by-point comparison of the dragon with the railroad train? Both "lap the miles" and "lick the valleys up." Both make horrid, hooting noises.

But are they exactly the same thing? Do lapping and licking generally mean the same things for dragons and trains? Thus we see that at the same time that we can perceive likenesses in two objects, we can also see differences. And this act of

seeing differences is called contrast. Contrast, too, is a normal process when we try to tell our ideas to somebody else. If somebody who has never been to a zoo asks "What is a giraffe?" we might reply, "Well, it's like a horse in that it has four legs, but its neck isn't at all like a horse's. A giraffe's neck is much longer and taller, and its head is shaped quite differently."

Notice that before we can compare or contrast items, we must first have a basis for that comparison. Does the sentence "Susie is a red-head, but Mary has four cocker spaniels" really compare or contrast anything? Obviously not. So we have to look for the common basis. If the basis were "the number of cocker spaniels possessed by two girls," we would have a definite point. We could say, for instance, "Mary has four cocker spaniels, but Susie has only two." Going back to those neglected giraffes and horses, we must have the basis of "length of neck" before we can point out the contrast.

The non-storied literature you will soon be reading uses this normal way of thinking and judging things--comparison and contrast--as a way of organizing material. You yourself have very likely thought about some of the contrasts the authors deal with. In coming back from a camping trip, for instance, you might have thought, "I wish I could live out in the mountains all the time and never have to come back to town." This is the view of "Blow, blow, thou winter wind," a poem you will soon be reading.

As you read the following essays and poems, then see what things are being compared and contrasted--and for what reasons and by what ways. At the first of each passage will be a brief introduction; at the end will be a set of questions for you to mull over and then discuss.

I. "A Creole Courtyard" by Lafcadio Hearn

Introduction

Some people consider New Orleans their favorite American city. Certainly in reading this description of a Creole courtyard one can see why: it contains many of the items wanted in a "Paradise." Would you add any to Hearn's collection?

Notice what appeals he makes to our senses. You might try to see whether you react the same to the description of what is inside and outside the garden.

(For selection beginning "An atmosphere of tranquillity...." and ending "...care to cross Canal Street," see "A Creole Courtyard" by Lafcadio Hearn from The Writing of Lafcadio Hearn, published by Houghton Mifflin Co., Vol. I, pp. 147-148.)

Questions for Study

1. What senses do these details appeal to?

"the fountains murmured faintly"
"the odor of the rich West India tobacco"
"their flower eyes of flaming scarlet"
"gnarled arms trembled under the weight of honeyed fruit"
"streetcars vulgarly jingle their bells"

2. Is there any difference in the sound of these phrases: "the cooing of amorous doves" and "Without, roared the Iron Age,

the angry waves of American traffic"?

3. Describe in a sentence of your own, the chief difference between the inside of the house and the world outside it.

4. Which--inside or outside--does the writer like best? How do you know?

5. What effect does he gain from repeating "Without. . . Within" at the first of the sentences?

6. How do the details of traffic and trucks fit in with the author's statement in the first sentence? Why doesn't he mention buildings or people or conversation as found in the "outside world"?

7. If this is a "Paradise," why does Hearn allow the "barbaric sentinels," the "smothering vines," and the "peering plants"?

8. The essay begins with a general statement about the "tranquillity and quiet happiness" of the old house. In the description of particular details of the courtyard which follows, the author uses many particular words and phrases to convey the impression of tranquillity and quiet happiness. How many such words and phrases can you discover? Notice, in particular, the details of language which help to suggest <u>happiness.</u>

II. "Blow, blow"

Have you ever wished you could run away from home and join a group like Robin Hood's band? You might day-dream that in such a group you could live in a beautiful forest many miles away from unfair parents, mean boys and girls, and cruel schoolteachers. In a play called <u>As You Like It</u>, William Shakespeare includes such a band, the followers of Duke Senior, who escaped from the cruelty of the court. At a feast in the Forest of Arden, where they now live, they sing the following song describing why they prefer the life in the "green world."

II. Blow, blow, thou winter wind" by William Shakespeare

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
  As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
  Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly.
  Then heigh-ho! the holly!
  This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
That dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remembered not.
Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most living mere folly.
Then heigh-ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly.

Questions for Study

1. For a contrast to be effective, there has to be some similarity between the two things contrasted in order to form a "basis for comparison." That is, we can compare a slow runner with a fast one because both are runners, a red house with a white one because both are painted houses, a trip to Yellowstone with one to Disneyland because both are vacation or holiday excursions. In this song, the Duke's men, having fled the Court and come to the forest, seem to be comparing two ways of life. Circle the one sentence which seems to you to describe most satisfactorily the two ways of life being compared:

A - City life is being compared with country life.
B - The old life at court is being compared with the new life in the Forest.
C - Life in winter is being compared with life in summer.
D - Life on earth is being compared with life after death.
E - Married life is being compared with bachelor life.

2. The two lives are being compared on a particular basis, with respect, that is, to a particular thing they have in common, though in different ways. Circle the sentence which most accurately describes the common ground or basis for this comparison.

A - The pleasures of the two lives are being compared.
E - The hardships of the two lives are being compared.
C - The climates in which the two lives are conducted are being compared.
D - The relationships with women in the two lives are being compared.
E - The lengths of the two lives are being compared.

3. Does the contrast lead to any conclusion? Is one life preferred to the other? If so, which one--and why?

4. The winter wind has a tooth and a "rude breath"; it is called "thou." What sort of figure do these characteristics combine to create? Can you find another similar figure in the poem?

5. Look at the rhyming words at the end of each line. Do

they seem to form a pattern? Does this pattern enforce any set of contrasts in the poem?

6. At one point in each stanza, the singers are led by the comparison they are making to a very broad and somewhat shocking general conclusion. Can you find this statement? Does it seem sensible to you? Do you think Shakespeare wants us to take it seriously? Can you think of any reason, if he does not, why he should have included this statement?

III. "Joan and David"

What is the fate of most heroes? Do they live happily ever after? In this passage DeQuincey compares two heroes --David the King and Joan of Arc--on this basis. As you read the passage, notice in what ways the lives of the two were alike. Then see how their fates differed, and why.

III. "Joan and David" by Thomas DeQuincey

What is to be thought of her? What is to be thought of the poor shepherd girl from the hills and forest of Lorraine, that --like David, the Hebrew shepherd boy from the hills and forests of Judea--rose suddenly out of the quiet, out of the safety, out of the religious inspiration, rooted in deep pastoral solitudes, to a station in the van of armies, and to the more perilous station at the right hand of kings? The Hebrew boy inaugurated his patriotic mission by an act, by a victorious act, such as no man could deny. But so did the girl of Lorraine, if we read her story as it was read by those who saw her nearest. Adverse armies bore witness to the boy as no pretender but so they did to the gentle girl. Judged by the voices of all who saw them from a station of good will, both were found true and loyal to any promises involved in their first acts.

Enemies it was that made the difference between their subsequent fortunes. The boy rose to a splendor and a noonday prosperity, both personal and public, that rang through the records of his people and became a byword among his posterity for a thousand years, until the sceptre was departing from Judah. The poor, forsaken girl, on the contrary, drank not herself from the cup of rest which she had secured for France. She never sang together with the songs that rose in her native Domremy as echoes to the departing steps of invaders. She mingled not in the festal dances at Vaucoule which celebrated in rapture the redemption of France. No! for her voice was then silent; her feet were dust. Pure, innocent, noble-hearted girl! This was among the strongest pledges for thy truth, that never once--no, not for a moment of weakness--didst thou revel in the vision of coronets and honor from man.

Questions for Study

1. In what ways did the lives of Joan and David resemble

each other? From your own knowledge of Joan and David, describe further the parts of their lives that DeQuincey merely mentions.

2. What is the chief point of contrast between the two lives?

3. Each of the following phrases if a figurative way of stating the same fact about Joan: "drank not from the cup of rest," "the departing step of invaders," "mingled not in the festal dances," "her voice was then silent; her feet were dust." Can you state this fact directly in one sentence? Why has DeQuincey stated it as he has?

4. List the words which the author uses to describe the two directly, such as "The Hebrew shepherd boy," "Pure, innocent, noble-hearted girl." Which of the two would seem more to get our sympathy on this basis?

5. Why, then, does DeQuincey even bring in David? Couldn't he have gained the same effect by describing only Joan?

6. The passage begins with a question. What answer, if any, has been given by the end of the discussion?

IV. "Up at a Villa"

Which do you prefer, the city or the country? In this poem you will meet a man who definitely prefers one to the other. In telling you his favorite, he will seem to be talking directly to you. At one point, for example, when he says "Well, now, look at our villa!" he almost nudges your elbow. But why does he so insist on one place over the other? Look at the details he chooses to show you how he feels about both city and country.

IV. "Up at a Villa--Down in the City (As Distinguished by an Italian Person of Quality)" by Robert Browning

Had I but plenty of money, money enough and to spare,
The house for me, no doubt, were a house in the city-square;
Ah, such a life, such a life, as one leads at the window there!

Something to see, by Bacchus, something to hear, at least!
There, the whole day long, one's life is a perfect feast;
While up at a villa one lives, I maintain it, no more than a beast.

Well, now, look at our villa! stuck like the horn of a bull
Just on a mountain-edge as bare as the creature's skull,
Save a mere shag of a bush with hardly a leaf to pull!
--I scratch my own, sometimes, to see if the hair's turned
wool.

But the city, oh, the city--the square with the houses! Why?
They are stone-faced, white as a curd, there's something to take the
Houses in four straight lines, not a single front awry;
You watch who crosses and gossips, who saunters, who hurries by;
Green blinds, as a matter of course to draw when the sun gets high;
And the shops with fanciful signs which are painted properly.

What of a villa? Though winter be over in March by rights,
'Tis May perhaps ere the snow shall have withered well off the heights
You've the brown plowed land before, where the oxen steam and wheeze
And the hills over-smoked behind by the faint gray olive-trees.

Is it better in May, I ask you? You've summer all at once;
In a day he leaps complete with a few strong April suns.
'Mid the sharp short emerald wheat, scarce risen three fingers well,
The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows out its great red bell
Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the children to pick and sell.

Is it ever hot in the square? There's a fountain to spout and splash!
In the shade it sings and springs; in the shine such foambows flash
On the horses with curling fish-tails, that prance and paddle and pash
Round the lady atop in her conch--fifty gazers do not abash;
Though all she wears is some weeds round her waist in a sort of sash.

All the year long at the villa, nothing to see though you linger,
Except yon cypress that points like death's lean lifted forefinger.
Some think fireflies pretty, when they mix i' the corn and mingle,
Or thrid the stinking hemp till the stalks of it seem a-tingle.
Late August or early September, the stunning cicala is shrill,
And the bees keep their tiresome whine round the resinous firs on the hill
Enough of the seasons--I spare you the months of the fever and chill.

Ere you open your eyes in the city, the blessed church-bells begin;
No sooner the bells leave off than the diligence rattles in;
You get the pick of the news, and it costs you never a pin.
By and by there's the traveling doctor gives pills, lets blood, draws tears
Or the Pulcinello-trumpet breaks up the market beneath.
At the post-office such a scene-picture--the new play, piping hot!
And a notice how, only this morning, three liberal thieves were shot.

Above it, behold the Archbishop's most fatherly of rebukes,
And beneath, with his crown and his lion, some little new law
of the Duke's
Or a sonnet with flowery marge, to the Reverend Don So-and
-so,
Who is Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarcha, Saint Jerome, and Cicero,
"And moreover" (the sonnet goes rhyming) "the skirts of Saint
Paul has reached,
Having preached us those six Lent-lectures more unctuous
than ever he preached."
Noon strikes--here sweeps the Procession! our Lady borne
smiling and smart
With a pink gauze gown all spangles, and seven swords stuck
in her heart!
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, tootle-te-tootle the fife;
No keeping one's haunches still; it's the greatest pleasure in life.

But bless you, it's dear--it's dear! fowls, wine, at double the rate.
They have clapped a new tax upon salt, and what oil pays passing
the gate
It's a horror to think of. And, so, the villa for me, not the city!
Beggars can scarcely be choosers: but still, ah, the pity, the pity!
Look, two and two go the priests, then the monks with cowls
and sandals,
And the penitents dressed in white shirts, a-holding the yellow
candles
One, he carries a flag up straight, and another a cross with
handles,
And the Duke's guard brings up the rear, for the better preven-
tion of scandals;
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, tootle-te-tootle the fife,
Oh, a day in the city-square, there is no such pleasure in life!

Questions for Study

1. Does each stanza concern itself exclusively with either the city or the country? Does the speaker keep an even balance between the two or is one stressed more than the other? Why?

2. Don't you usually consider a mountain-edge, a tulip, a cypress-tree, and bees as pleasant, even beautiful objects? What terms does the speaker use to describe them? Why?

3. What reason does the speaker give to explain why he cannot live in the city? Has he planted this idea elsewhere in the poem? Where?

4. What city activities does he enjoy? Do you agree that they add up to "the greatest pleasure in life"?

5. Ordinarily the last items in series are the most important. Do you think the religious procession in stanza 11 is the most im-portant to our man?

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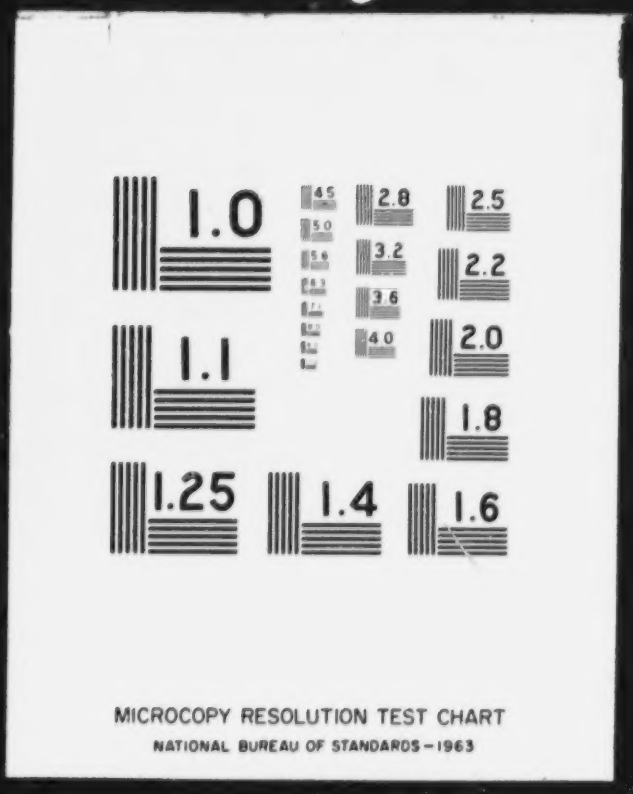

6. Who is Bacchus? Is it fitting that the speaker swears by him?

7. Poets often use "sound-effects" words to enforce the sense of the passage. Can you find any such words in the description of the fountain?

8. Rhyme is a way of linking words and thus ideas. Do you usually see any difference between "new play, piping hot" and "three liberal thieves were shot"? Does the speaker?

9. Do the speakers in "Blow, blow, thou winter wind" share this man's attitude? Compare the two attitudes.

Suggested Activities

1. How would you continue the statement that "No man is an island"? or that "Life is like a football game"? (Here the teacher might point out, particularly with the latter, the dangers of soupy sentimentality and false analogies).

2. How does Eastern Oregon or Washington differ from Western Oregon or Washington? Obviously, in many ways. Choose one basis for comparison and expand your ideas.

3. Hearn in "A Creole Courtyard" created a striking comparison between inside and outside a house by using strong sense impressions. Try your hand at creating a sense of place--your kitchen, your science classroom, the corner drugstore--by choosing sense impressions which really express the place.

4. Work up a speech or debate on a controversial issue. It could be humorous (Resolved, That there is a Santa Claus) or serious: (Resolved, That Capital Punishment be Abolished.)

5. Try writing a poem based on contrasting attitudes. It could be a dialogue between a logger and a banker on the best way to make a living, or an argument between a mother and a daughter on wearing lipstick.

6. Could the method of contrast/comparison help you define something? Can't giving examples help create a good contrast/comparison? Isn't there some overlapping among the non-storied modes of organization? Is this a good thing?

7. Have you seen any obvious comparison/contrast in any of the stories you have read?

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

FORM

PART FOUR: CLASSIFICATION AND DIVISION

Literature Curriculum II

Student Version

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STUDENT VERSION

CLASSIFICATION AND DIVISION

Oftentimes we enjoy sitting by the side of the road and watching the cars go by. When we do, we try to identify what the individual cars are--and what group they belong to. "That's a Falcon," we might say. "It's Ford's compact car." Or, seeing an especially dashing type, we might identify an Alfa Romeo--good for sports and racing.

When we do so, we are engaging in a very common action: classifying and dividing. It's the nature of man to want to make some order of the complicated world he sees about him. One way he does is to classify things: he classifies people as either good guys or bad guys; he calls trees either deciduous or evergreen.

This process, classification and division, has two sides: first, if someone sees a tree with bare branches in January, he will classify--pigeonhole--that tree into a larger class, Deciduous Trees--a class containing far more members than just that one tree. On the other hand, he can divide that set into the parts that comprise it: elms, maples, and so on. The same process can be gone through with any other group: someone seeing a man pushing a sweet little old lady downstairs would automatically--we hope--classify him as belonging to the general class Bad Guys. If we begin from the other direction, the class, we could very easily divide it into its parts, with members including not only Men-Who-Push-Old-Ladies-Downstairs but also Those-Who-Steal-Candy-from-Babies, Those-Who-Put-Salt-in-the-Sugar-Bowl, and the rest of their dastardly ilk.

Writers, too, often use classification and division to give form to their work, to provide a backbone for their ideas. Like most normal people, however, writers do not just go around classifying and dividing without a reason, without having some sort of basis for their plan. They would not, for instance, set out to classify Birds of the Tropics and then cover Cockatoos, Parakeets, Ospreys, Anacondas, and Mandrills--because the last three do not belong to the scheme. (Why not, by the way?)

So, the first principle of any good classification or division is that the basis on which it is made must be clear. See if you can determine what is the basis for the essay that follows.

I. "Showboats" by Philip Graham

You may have seen pictures of showboats in movies or on television. Those wonderful boats--elaborate paddle-wheelers that looked like giant wedding cakes--did exactly what their name implies. They traveled up and down the Mississippi River, anchoring at the towns along the river to put on a show, with dancing, singing, and usually a tear-jerking play. Unfortunately these showboats are a thing of the past.

(For selection beginning "In the palmiest days of the business...." and ending "...more grateful to him than is the cast." see "Showboats" by Philip Graham from Showboats: The History of An American Institution, University of Texas Press, Austin 1951, pp. 159-164.)

Questions for Study

1. Is there any overlapping between one division of the subject and the next? Prove your answer.

2. Why does Graham use the order that he does? Why does he begin with the size of the crew and end with a description of the actors?

3. The author clearly has not told us everything there is to know about showboats. Can you suggest a more specific title that would indicate the particular aspect of showboats with which this essay deals? Can you think of the titles of similar short essays dealing with other aspects of showboats which would be interesting to learn about?

4. Notice the comparisons he makes. What kind of effect does he suggest when he compares the leading man with a bridegroom, "necessary but not much talked about?" And why compare the wandering actors to "migratory birds?"

5. What concrete details does he use to make us see the characters? Why should the heroine have big eyes and carry roses? Why does the clown have a sad expression? Do details of this kind point to a general conclusion about the difference between the real characteristics of the showboat actors and the parts they are given to play?

II. Ross's "The School Store"

Most of us have our favorite stores. We like the things we can buy there as well as the things there are to see--and perhaps to touch. We often like the "atmosphere" of such stores, the smells, the sounds, perhaps the feeling that we are welcome, or that it is a store which is intended especially for us. This essay, by an American writer, describes one kind of store which he

knew when he was a boy. It was written in our own day, but it talks about the days of forty years ago. Perhaps the author isn't entirely correct when he says that all such stores have disappeared. Maybe you have seen stores something like the one he describes. Just the same, you should discover a number of things that were familiar forty years ago but which most boys and girls have never heard of today.

To my own kids--and I imagine most other youngsters today --the "school store" is just a room in the school building where one can buy books and supplies. It's an efficient, orderly place which provides all of the things needed for the pursuit of studies--all of them, but nothing more.

But forty years ago, in the big mid-western city where I grew up, the school store was a very different affair. Located within a block or so of the school, it was a highly independent enterprise, usually owned and operated by an elderly couple or widow who, more than likely, had migrated to America from foreign shores. Its relations with the school authorities tended to be a bit uneasy, for if it supplied many basic materials of education, it also trafficked in such instruments of inattention and disorder as bubble gum and cap pistols. And time spent in the school store was generally described by our elders and betters (who never darkened its doors) as "wasted".

It occurs to me now, although it didn't in those days, that all the school stores I ever knew (and because we moved a lot, they were numerous) were dimly lighted and, I suspect, not very clean. The one I came to know best was simply called, as were they all, The School Store, and was conducted by an ancient lady who was known to us all as "Ma" Korzibsky. It was situated down the block from Public School Fourteen, and while I have only the dimmest memory of the latter institution, I can--and frequently do--recall Ma's place in astonishing detail.

The jumble of wares that littered the worn counters of the store, lay behind the smeary glass of showcases, or gathered dust on dark shelves would be impossible to catalogue. The store-window, however, bore the words "School Supplies-Candy-Sundries" and one might say that these three kinds of offerings determined, in a general way, the areas or departments of Ma's modest establishment. One might say it--but inadequately. For to the youngsters of the city streets, in those television-less days, from Ma's place came the three-fold call of Duty, of Nourishment, and of Romance.

School Supplies, the materials of Duty, lay prominently displayed, with some attempt at neatness, at the front of the store. Here were the pads and pencils and erasers, the pens and pen-points

(there were few fountain pens among the younger set in those days), the rubber bands and paste-pots, the rather more frivolous gummed banners, bearing the school's name, which could be affixed to one's possessions. Here too were massive three-ring note books, bearing on their covers the drawing of a youth who was clad in a capacious "slicker," as we called the yellow oilskin raincoats which were fashionable in those times. On the represented surface of this garment, following the example of our "collegiate" elders who thus adorned the actual raincoats themselves, we would inscribe a colorful variety of nicknames, cryptic initials (significantly enclosing certain of them in hearts), and such jazzy phrases as "Hey toots" and "Free Air."

Whatever its occasional delights, though, Duty, as represented by School Supplies, essentially lacked charm. None of us was content to confine his visits to the school store to the simple business of purchasing academic necessities. Sooner or later we would wander in quest of Nourishment to the candy, which was kept in a long showcase. Here, behind cracked glass, lay an enticing array of confections whose notable quality was their cheapness. Among them you could find the candy bars, the Tootsie Rolls, the licorice whips which today's youngsters know--but know only in shamefully truncated form. Beside them lay the mounds of two-for-a-penny delicacies--the jaw breakers, the Banana Chews and Mary Janes and Chocolate Soldiers and Tasty Puddins and Malt Balls and Cream Puffs and Sweetie Pies--offering a luxurious diversity of shapes and textures and colors but also a suspiciously uniform flavor, associated with coal-tar derivative substitutes for sugar.

Ma Korzibsky and her colleagues in the school store industry were people of infinite patience--as they very well had to be. The expenditure of a nickel on two-for-a-penny candy was a lengthy undertaking which called for much indecisive hovering before the showcase, frequent changes of mind, and elaborate instructions to Ma, whose knowledge of English was none of the best. A battered scale stood on the counter and a tin scoop lay half-buried in a mound of dusty chocolates, but I never saw these instruments in use. Instead, Ma would use her gnarled fingers to pluck the desired items . . . from their resting place, laboriously laying them on the counter or, when the transaction ranged beyond a cent or two, dropping them, one by one, into a tiny paper bag while, beneath her breath, she counted them in her own, unidentified native tongue.

Sustained and fortified by the products of the Candy department, one felt free to invade the regions of Romance and browse amongst the "Sundries." Here the slightest pretense at order was abandoned and wares lay about in a glorious chaos. Slingshots draped their enticing forms upon stacks of soiled comic valentines; well-thumbed Western magazines concealed the boxes of percussion caps; a school banner was hopelessly involved with a set of fish-hooks (there were said to be perch in the park lagoon). A little hillock of soiled baseball caps was lodged in the open mouth of an

imitation-leather brief-case. On a stack of fading pictures of movie stars--Hoot Gibson, Ken Maynard, Laura La Plante, Dolores Del Rio--stood four small glass globes, intended for use as paperweights; inside each was a rustic winter scene and when the globe was shaken, little white fragments would fly about thickly and furiously inside to convey the utterly satisfying illusion of a snowstorm.

Sometimes one visited the "Sundries" in search of a specific item. Such were the "transfer pictures" or "decals," as they are called today. These somewhat primitive representations of warships, airplanes, and athletes carried the instructions, "Place face down on a piece of paper and rub with a damp rag until transfer of the picture is effected." This was pretentious nonsense, as everyone knew; the only place for a transfer picture was the back of the hand and "transfer was effected" simply by a liberal application of the tongue. Of equal interest to art-lovers were "sun-pictures"--drawings, again largely of military or sporting subjects, somehow made upon glass, which could be imprinted on sensitized paper simply by exposure to the sun. It was easy to over-expose and achieve only a glaring red surface or to under-expose and be rewarded by a pale image; a successful sun picture, we felt, was a triumph of both Art and Science.

Occasionally, too, one visited the "Sundries" in single-minded search for the latest issue of a magazine--Boy's Life, American Boy, St. Nicholas, True Detective--or for one of the humbler items of sporting equipment--a rubber ball for street use, a marble or two, a paper kite. Far more often, though, sojourns among the sundries were agreeably aimless affairs. One dipped into a magazine, lovingly tested the elastic of a sling shot, idly flipped and fiddled among games like "motoring" or "Doodlebug," or judiciously inspected tops. Ma's notable patience extended, indeed, to commercially unprofitable sociability. I am afraid groups of us often left the store empty-handed after an hour or more of rambling conversation, frank inspection and criticism of various wares, and even of fairly open horseplay. It was only when--as happened from time to time--the horseplay became violent that Ma would break into the shrill and generally effective threat, "Get outa here or I call the cop!"

What we talked about I cannot really say. Baseball, I suppose, and diseases and mortal injuries and which was the best car and who could lick who and who was a good teacher and whether there were ghosts and what was the highest you ever counted and had you seen this movie and even, in election year, what our fathers thought about Coolidge and Davis. Perhaps you could say our talk, too, was full of Sundries--as it was full of Romance.

There is nothing like a school store to be found near the handsome brick and glass school my children attend. It is probably just as well. Certainly the old school store was unsanitary and--with its pea-shooters, cheap magazines, and cheaper candy--plainly

subversive of youthful morals and health. Besides, my older son, who is saving money for a Polaroid camera, could hardly find much fascination in sun-pictures. And I am glad the younger one, whose teeth are being scientifically straightened at great expense, is spared the temptation of jawbreakers and Banana Chews. They both know a great deal about something called the "theory of sets" and they speak familiarly of the atomic nucleus, so I'm afraid the old stories in Boy's Life or Real Western would strike them as pretty dull. To be truthful, I guess we did waste a great deal of time in the old school stores. And perhaps my own odd longing to visit one of them once again is a longing, too, for the days when there was time to waste.

Questions for Study

1. Why does the author, who is writing about a school store of forty years ago, begin his essay by talking about what a school store generally means today?

2. How does the author use the words on the store window, "School Supplies - Candy - Sundries" to help organize or give form to his essay? Can you find clear subdivisions within any principal section of the essay?

3. Which part of the store is referred to by each of the three words, Duty, Nourishment, and Romance? Why does the author use these rather high-sounding words to describe areas of the store?

4. By now you should see how classification and division play an important part in organizing the essay. Does this principle account for the form of the entire essay? Can you find examples of comparison and contrast? Does the author describe things by example? Does he offer any definitions?

5. Why are bubble gum and cap pistols referred to as "instruments of inattention and disorder?" What does the author mean by "shamefully truncated form?" Why did Ma Korzibsky and storekeepers like her have to be "people of infinite patience?" What does the author mean when he says that "our talk was full of Sundries--as it was full of Romance?"

6. How seriously must we take everything the author says? Do you think he really believes that the school store was "subversive of youthful morals and health?" Is he really glad, for the sake of his own sons, that the old kind of school store has disappeared?

7. Why does the author suggest that his own sons would not find the old school store very interesting? Do you agree that they --or you--would not?

8. At the beginning and again at the end of the essay, the author talks about "wasting time." Does he approve of wasting time? Do you agree with his attitude?

III. "The Fish" by Elizabeth Bishop.

Do you like to go fishing? Do you like to test your wits and strength against that opponent down deep in the water? The writer of this poem once caught a fish that was "tremendous." See then how she acted when she reeled it in. Have you ever done the same thing she tells of in the last line?

(For poem, by Elizabeth Bishop, see Poems North and South, published by Houghton Mifflin Company, 1955.)

Questions for Study

1. In what order do we see the parts of the fish? First we get a general impression of his large size and weight, but then we see him more precisely. How would you divide and classify the kinds of things we learn about the fish?

2. Is her order of classification and division the same sort you might find in a textbook for science class?

3. Is this fish beautiful or ugly? What details would you use to prove your point? What would you make of this: on his skin are "shapes like full-blown roses" (beautiful things, are they not?) but those shapes are "stained and lost through age."

4. The writer never comes right out and tells us what has happened when she talks about the "five big hooks/ grown firmly in his mouth." What do they indicate about the fish? Why are they like medals?

5. Is it actually possible for victory to "fill up" a boat? What emotional effect is the writer talking about? How does this feeling grow from her whole experience of catching a fish?

6. What realistic--and emotional--facts then make up "everything" when she says "everything/ was rainbow, rainbow, rainbow?"

7. She does not really explain why, but we feel that we know why she let the fish go. Why was it? Would you have done the same?

8. Why, now, do you think she classifies the parts of the fish in the order that she does? What do we see about the skin that helps us to begin to understand what he has been through? Why does the author put this detail before the description of the mouth?

IV. "All the world's a stage . . ." - by William Shakespeare.

We've seen fish and showboats classified. Some writers, however, would attempt to classify and divide all of life. Such a man was William Shakespeare, who divided man's life into seven ages. Read this passage and see how he makes you see each, from the baby to the old man.

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first, the infant
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
Then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lin'd
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,

With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;
His youthful hose, well sav'd, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

Questions for Study

1. How does the metaphor of the world as a stage, with men and women merely players, introduce the main subject; the seven ages of man?

2. Is the picture that the speaker gives of the infant the same sort of picture you would see in advertisements for baby food?

3. What does he suggest by calling the schoolboy's face a "shining morning face?" Is the comparison to a snail fitting?

4. How does the speaker regard the lover? Are we to admire him? Feel sorry for him? Laugh at him? Give reasons for your answer.

5. What does this line about the soldier literally mean: "Seeking the bubble reputation/ Even in the cannon's mouth?." Do you think the speaker admires a soldier's career?

6. Have you ever seen the character Pantaloon in a puppet show? Judging from this passage, how old would you say a man in the "sixth age" is? What has happened to the "good capon" (rather like fried chicken) that formerly lined his "fair, round belly"? What kind of voice is suggested by the words pipes and whistles?

7. What kind of attitude does the speaker apparently have toward the characters he is describing? One way to see that point of view is by the verbs he chooses. How do you react to words like mewling and puking? or whining and creeping for schoolboys? Look for other words that express the speaker's attitude.

8. The division of man's life into stages, in each of which he plays a different "role," clearly gives form to the speech. In what way does this plan further help the speaker to convey his attitude toward human life?